

Four sculptures to adorn Capitol

For 90 years, four niches in the state Capitol rotunda were largely unadorned. Two were empty, one held a 4-foot-tall statue of Martha Hughes Cannon and another housed a bust, but they were not in keeping with Capitol architect Richard Kletting's vision for the space. That will change when the building reopens in 2008 after four years of renovation. Capitol Preservation Board members this week approved a series of sculptures by DFH, a sculpture firm based in San Pedro, Calif. The four classical bronze sculptures represent Kletting's original theme, the "Spirit of Utah." "This building is timeless. The ideals [the sculptures] express are equally timeless," said sculptor Rob Firmin. One titled "Land and Community" features a man climbing a mountaintop with a Rocky Mountain elk calf, grasping a black locust branch. Another, "Art and Education," shows a woman holding a lyre and a girl looking at a book. Three of the four sculptures include children - a deliberate choice for the team of three sculptors. The artists hope to intrigue Utah children with little details. The youngsters, Firmin said, are equal actors in the artwork. "The children are responsible," he added. "They know they are inheriting a strong and certain future." The bronze figures will stand 11 feet tall. The \$380,000 cost of casting, transporting and installing them in the rotunda is included in the \$200 million Capitol restoration budget. -Rebecca Walsh

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Master sculptor Eugene Daub looks over a model that will fill one of the four niches in the state capitol rotunda upon completion of renovations. The model sized niche the sculpture will fill is behind Daub. The completed sculptures will be just over 11 feet tall. The model here represents technology. It has two figures. The adult represents the past and present. The youth represents the present and future. (Al Hartmann/The Salt Lake Tribune)